

CHIMNEYS
CLASS I SCENIC-RECREATIONAL STATE NATURAL AREA

COUNTY: Van Buren

7.5' QUADRANGLE: Whitwell
Tennessee

PHYSIOGRAPHIC PROVINCE: Cumberland Plateau

ACREAGE: 33 Acres

OWNERSHIP: State of

YEAR DESIGNATED: 1999

DESCRIPTION: The Chimneys is a 33-acre natural area located in Marion County. It is located in what is commonly referred to as the Pocket Wilderness where Pocket Creek cuts through Cumberland Plateau sandstone forming Pocket Gorge. Pocket Creek has sculpted the impressive feature known as the Chimneys over vast geological time. They are two isolated, 200-foot high, towering pinnacles of Pennsylvanian Warren Point sandstone connected to a central base. A natural window forms at the base. The pinnacles and natural bridge rise from the gorge floor and are nearly as high as the surrounding bluff. The natural area is adjacent to the Chimneys Scenic Park. It was designated as a state natural area in 1999, the same year it was donated to the state by U.S. Steel Corporation, a subsidiary of Marathon Ashland Petroleum, LLC.

A dry oak-pine woodland surrounds the Chimneys on the surrounding bluffs. Chestnut oak and Virginia pine are common to this area. Maple-leaf viburnum and sweet-shrub are also often found in areas like this. Small pockets of glade and barrens vegetation can be found in a few areas with shallow soil on dry upper and bluffs. There is an old growth hemlock forest in the gorge comprised of densely forested hemlock, chestnut oak, magnolia or cucumber tree, and striped maple. A thicket of rosebay rhododendron grows along the creek, making passage to the base of the Chimneys challenging. There are numerous ferns and mosses covering sandstone talus boulders at the base the steep slopes. Some of the steepest slopes are wet seep cliffs that support a diversity of mosses, liverworts, and other plants not found elsewhere on the site.

SITE MANAGEMENT: Division of Natural Heritage, 401 Church Street, 14th Floor L&C Tower, Nashville, TN 37243-0447, phone (615) 532-0431, Chimneys Scenic Park Association 6191 Pocket Rd., Whitwell, TN 37397 and Marion County Government POB 46, Jasper, TN 37347 are cooperators.

PUBLIC ACCESS: Public access allowed but is limited. The Chimneys Scenic Park, maintained by the Chimneys Scenic Park Association provides parking, an overlook of the gorge, and a short hiking trail are available. There are no developed trails on the natural area.

DIRECTIONS: The Chimneys Scenic Park is accessible via Highway 108 between Whitwell and Palmer. Turn on Pocket Road and proceed for about six miles. The entrance to the park is on the left just before a church.